

VZCZCXRO3556
RR RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0895 1711757
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 191757Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8398
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 000895

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR, INR/IAA/MAC,
EEB/IFD/OMA
EEB/IFD/ODF
STATE PASS TO AID FOR LAC/CAR
STATEPASS TO TREASURY FOR SARAH GRAY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EFLU](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#) [DR](#)
SUBJECT: HAITI: AVIAN FLU OUTBREAK IN HAITI

RE: PORT AU PRICE 00144

Summary

¶1. Acting Minister of Agriculture Joanas Gue announced June 11 that 11 positive cases representing four outbreaks of the H5N2 avian influenza virus were identified in four areas of Haiti. Gue attributed the cause of the outbreak in at least one area to fighting cocks that originated in the Dominican Republic. Ministry of Agriculture officials urged public vigilance in connection with safety measures that might be imposed. The import ban on poultry and poultry products from the Dominican Republic will remain in force. Donors active in the sector will meet with government representatives June 19 in order to discuss the outbreak and the effectiveness of current control measures. End summary.

Government Reaction

¶2. Acting Minister of Agriculture Joanas Gue announced June 11 that 11 cases of H5N2 avian influenza had been discovered in poultry in four locations in Haiti: the towns of Limonade and Cap Haitien in the north, Miragoane in the south and Cerca-la-Source in the central region. He said that the cases in Cerca-la-Source had come from fighting cocks imported from the Dominican Republic. Gue warned that more drastic measures would be required to control the spread of the H5N2 virus and while the H5N2 type is not harmful to humans, there is concern it could mutate into the deadly H5N1 virus. If not contained, the virus could have a detrimental effect on the country's health care system, Gue argued. He encouraged the Haitian public to abide by all measures and declared that the import ban on poultry products emanating from the Dominican Republic (imposed in January - reftel) would be maintained until further notice.

¶3. MoAg Animal Health Services Director Dr. Max Millien said publicly June 13 that information on the outbreaks would be communicated to Dominican authorities and added the country desperately needs a quarantine system at the Haiti/Dominican border, which he identified as the weak point in the control chain.

¶4. Dr. Millien said the MoAg recently coordinated a meeting of forty-seven MoAg and Ministry of Health technicians to discuss emergency response measures, which he did not identify. (Note: The National Steering Committee on Avian Flu -- comprised of the MoAg, MoH, WHO, the Inter-American Institute of Cooperation for Agriculture/IICA and USAID -- plans to meet June 19 to discuss the outbreak and follow up on response efforts. End note.)

Donor Assistance

¶5. The World Bank and FAO currently fund an avian flu program valued at USD 1.25 million (USD 1 million and USD 250,000 respectively from the World Bank and FAO). Project components include public awareness, animal health, and public health. Currently the World Bank is negotiating a USD 1.5 million emergency response and institutional capacity building component to combat avian flu. The project would be implemented by the Ministries of Agriculture and Health.

¶6. Haiti established an epidemiological surveillance system to detect Avian Flu with USAID support one year ago. This system likely assisted in the recent detection of the virus.

SANDERSON